Investigation and Evidence 3

MEMORANDUM

June 18, 1964

To: Mrs. Julia T. Eide

From: Mr. William T. Coleman

Subject: Testimony of Carroll Hamilton Seeley, Jr., James L. Ritchie, and Miss Virginia H. James, Department of State

On June 17, 1964, Mr. Slawson and I took the depositions of three persons who are employed by the State Department. These persons were originally listed to testify before the full Commission but when we didn't reach them last week Mr. Rankin, after clearing with Congressman Ford, indicated that we could take testimony by depositions.

The three persons and their positions at the State Department and the reason why their testimony was taken are as follows:

(1) CARROLL HAMILTON SEELEY, Jr. is the Assistant Chief of the Legal Division of the Passport Office of the Department of State. Mr. Seeley, along with James L. Ritchie, looked at the Oswald passport file after the State Department had received the CIA telegram stating that Oswald had appeared at the Cuban Embassy. Mr. Seeley also prior to 1962 was Chief of the Security Branch of the Legal Division of the Passport Office and in that capacity had initialled several of the memoranda prepared by Miss Waterman in re whether Oswald had lost his citizenship. These memoranda were prepared in 1961, beginning with the memorandum of August 18, 1961.

(2) JAMES L. RITCHIE is an attorney in the Legal Division of the Passport Office. He is the attorney who first examined the Oswald passport file after the receipt of the CIA telegram. He testified that he reviewed the file and thought that nothing could be done, but because it was out of the ordinary he put the file on Mr. Seeley's desk for review by Mr. Seeley. Mr. Seeley testified that he reviewed the file and thought that nothing could be done so, therefore, he returned it to the filing section of the Passport Office.

(3) MISS VIRGINIA H. JAMES is the International Relations Officer in the Office of Soviet Affairs of the Department of State. Miss James is in charge of handling matters relating to visas in the Soviet area from the political angle only. She was aware of the original 1959 Embassy despatches and also approved the reply to the Embassy made on November 2, 1959. Miss James also beginning in July 1961 took an interest in Oswald's return to the United States and was kept advised concerning decisions made in the Passport Office with respect to Oswald's citizenship and decisions made in the Visa Office with respect to Marina's visa. Miss James also wrote the memorandum which was the basis for the Soviet desk to request Mr. Crump in the Visa Office to ask INS to reverse its decision that Section 243 (g) should not be waived with respect to Marina.

cc: Howard P. Willens

WTColeman/ht